



Capt. Brian Angell completes a set of push-ups as part of the USAFE MSS Fitness Program, which prepares local Air Force personnel for tougher PT standards that will be implemented servicewide in January 2004.

Stuttgart airmen focus on fitness

Ahead of servicewide change in physical conditioning test, USAFE Mission Support Squadron institutes training program

Story & photos by Melanie Casey

The U.S. Air Forces in Europe Mission Support Squadron, located on Patch Barracks, is on the ball.

Well before the Air Force announced it was changing its physical training standards (effective January 2004), the USAFE MSS staff had a fitness regime firmly in place.

USAFE MSS Commander Col. Karen Taylor initiated the program in January with the help of Chief Master Sgt. Yolanda Richardson, who is also certified personal trainer and group instructor. Taylor wanted to provide an opportunity for her airmen to get in shape, work out as a team and be combat-ready.

Also, as part of Stuttgart's "purple" community (one composed of service members from all branches of the military, many of which hold unit physical training activities during duty hours), Taylor believed her unit should follow suit.

Initially, the MSS offered PT two afternoons a week, with one of those sessions mandatory.

A third training day was added, Richardson said, "because we noticed that everyone was attending both days."

The program "gives [USAFE MSS members] an opportunity to be fit and train as one team," she said.

The program offers aerobics in the Patch Fitness Center along with running, interval training and strength training. The squadron currently has six certified group instructors, including Taylor, who take turns leading the PT sessions.

The program continues to get tougher, inspired by USAFE Commander Gen. Robert "Doc" Fogelsong, who initiated a USAFE Combat Fitness Program this summer. Every session includes cardio training, push-ups and sit-ups, since they will be a part of the new PT test.

USAFE MSS recently completed a preliminary test based on the proposed Air Force standards to "provide members with baseline scores and improve, if neces-

Air Force to toughen PT test

The Air force is getting a little tougher.

In January 2004 the service will institute a new fitness test designed to better measure the physical capabilities of its troops.

The current evaluation system involves a cycle ergometry test, sit-ups and push-ups.

Parts of the present test will be retained, but the cycle will be rel-

egated to fitness history.

Beginning in January 2004 all airmen will be tested in the following proposed areas:

- Muscle fitness (measured by sit-ups and push-ups).
- Body composition (measured by waist circumference).
- Cardiovascular endurance (measured by a 1.5 mile run).

-Melanie Casey

sary, before testing standards begin," Richardson said.

Sixty-one percent of the MSS members who participated scored in the proposed "good" to "excellent" range, Richardson said.

The proactive program seems to be working.

According to a recent survey conducted by Tech. Sgt. Garry Smith (who scored 100 on the preliminary test and is one of the certified PT trainers), 89 percent of the respondents said, "they have seen an increase in their level of fitness by noticing they can work out longer and/or at higher intensities while feeling less tired at the end of a workout."

"Our ultimate goal," Richardson noted, "is to keep our people fit for health reasons and mission accomplishment. It all boils down to combat readiness."

USAFE MSS's Staff Sgt. Amanda Perkins stretches before a squadron workout on Patch's Husky Field.

